



Living Well

Raising Kids, Eating Right, Spending Smart, Living Well

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**Are you
ready for a
disaster
such as
hurricane,
flood, or
tornado?**

Plan Ahead to Cope with Disaster



Am I ready for a hurricane, flood, or tornado? Is my family prepared to cope with a disaster? Lately, many people have been asking themselves these questions. Although it may not be possible to prevent a disaster, it is possible for your family to be prepared to cope with one. First, learn about the hazards that could occur in your area.

Then, meet with your family to develop a family disaster plan. Your plan should include a meeting place near your home for when an emergency threatens your house. Also, select a meeting place outside your neighborhood in case the area is evacuated. Emergency contact information is also important. Be sure to have an out-of-state contact for family members to call when they cannot reach each other within the disaster zone.

Next, put your plan into action. Assemble a two-week supply of items your family would need to take care of yourselves if relief workers cannot get to you. A three-day supply of these items should be in a portable container, "ready to go" if you need to evacuate. Your kit should include water, food, first aid items, clothing and bedding, tools and supplies, and special items. Post emergency phone numbers. Conduct a home hazard hunt. Learn first aid and CPR.

Finally, practice and maintain your plan. Several times a year, conduct a "practice" exercise to be sure everyone in your family remembers what to do. For more information, contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross or your local emergency manager.



Written by: Karen Lynn Poff, Senior Extension Agent, FCS



Be sure to order your free credit reports through the centralized channels created by the new law or you may end up getting scammed into paying for extra services.

GET YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT NOW

Part of living well is being financially fit. Your credit report is a good indicator of how financially fit you are. Your credit report is your financial biography.

On October 1, Virginians became eligible to get a copy of their personal credit report from each of the three major national credit reporting agencies – Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. You can get a free credit report every year. The report itself is free. There will be a small charge for your credit score. While it is important to review your report, it is equally important to know your score. You can request your score by mail, telephone, or internet.

Annual Credit Report Request Service
PO Box 105281
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281
877-322-8228
www.annualcreditreport.com

MYFICO.com www.myfico
800-342-6726

Equifax www.equifax.com
800-685-1111

Experian www.experian.com
866-200-6020

TransUnion www.transunion.com
800-888-4213

Written by: Lou Gorr, Extension Agent, FCS, Prince George

Look for resources to help you understand the changes your teen is going through. Check with your local Extension office.

Healthy Teen Development

1–Remember, parents matter. Make a difference in the life of your teen by providing guidance and support.

2–Stay warm and close. It's impossible to love your teen too much. Spoil your teen with love and support every day.

3–Set limits and provide structure. Clearly communicate your expectations to your teen. Rules and expectations should change throughout your child's life, but children of all ages need clear rules.

4–Stay involved with your teen's life. Ask questions about schoolwork and friends, and attend your teens' extracurricular activities.

5–Enforce rules and consequences. Let your teen know what the consequences of breaking rules will be ahead of time. Follow through on enforcing punishment.

6–Be consistent. Parents should discuss and agree on basic parenting principles for guiding their children.

7–Explain yourself and engage your teen in decisions and conversations. Discuss the reasons for rules and consequences with your teen.

8–Don't use harsh discipline. Harsh discipline, like yelling or slapping, is not an effective long-term approach to discipline.

9–Treat your teen with respect. Your teen is growing up. Acknowledge your teen's increasing independence and ability to make decisions.

10–Understand adolescence is a period of change — for parents and children. As a parent, you are changing as you develop new information and skills to help guide your teen.

Resource: Iowa State University Extension



Family Meals Healthy for Body, Mind, and Spirit

All cultures appreciate the value of family mealtime. However, these days only a small percentage of families successfully achieve having regular meals together.

Mealtime is about much more than food and eating. Mealtime is a time for members of the family to share victories and challenges, ideas and opportunities. It is a time to really hear what is going on in one another's lives. Children are able to enhance their social skills and vocabulary, and parents are able to brush-up on their listening skills and practice parental engagement. Parental engagement is simply being involved and interested in your child's life; being a hands-on parent.

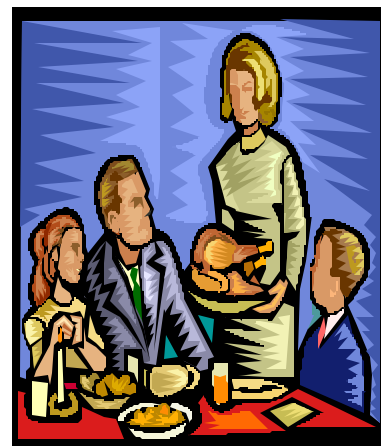
Research has identified a strong link between family meals and healthy kids. Children who eat at least five meals a week with their families fare better physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Eating together as a family tends to improve overall diet quality; particularly, fruit and vegetable consumption increases. With current obesity rates as high as they are, this is another reason for families to focus on making family mealtimes a priority.

School performance is enhanced by family meals and a healthful diet. During these times of SOLs and increased pressure to perform well in school, children need to be well-nourished, and they also need to know that they have the support of their family as they tackle life's challenges.

Bottom-line, a family that eats together thrives together. Family mealtime is one tradition that we need to fight to hold on to; our children are worth it.

Written by: Viola Holmes, Extension Agent, FCS, Albemarle County



Families that eat together thrive together.

Eating together as a family tends to improve fruit and vegetable consumption.

Depression in Older Adults

Nearly everyone, no matter what his or her age, feels "down" or "blue" at one time or another. However, clinical depression is another matter. For older adults, depression is often elusive for caregivers to determine and difficult for professionals to diagnose. Depression is the most common functional disorder among elderly persons and quite possibly the most under diagnosed.

Recognizing depression in older persons is complicated. The clinician as well as the patient may incorrectly assume that his or her symptoms are part

of the aging process. An elderly person may more readily report physical symptoms rather than depressive symptoms, but upon investigation the symptoms have no physical basis.

Understanding depression is a key element for effective caregiving. Finally, caregivers should consider the importance of exercise, activity, and social networks. Providing activities and opportunities in these areas can play a preventive as well as therapeutic role in the treatment.



Depressed persons often feel unworthy.

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Holiday Poisoning Hazards

The winter holiday season brings a bustle of festive activity to our homes – and the potential for accidental poisoning to our families. Unusual plants and decorations are displayed indoors, visitors bring their medications in suitcases and purses, alcoholic beverages are served at holiday celebrations and brightly packaged products beckon underneath the tree.

What can you do to prevent an accidental poisoning from interrupting the holiday season? First, educate yourself and what might be poisonous:

THINGS THAT DO NOT deserve their reputation include:

Poinsettia – accidental ingestion of this plant has not caused ANY cases of serious poisoning in children.

Shellacked or Varnished Ornaments – the shellac or varnish, once dried, is very poorly digested and therefore not poisonous.

Tinsel and Icicles – often made of plastic or aluminum, they are not usually poisonous but can cause choking.

Tree Ornaments – most modern ornaments are plastic, glass, or Styrofoam and are NOT poisonous. Many

ornaments can cause choking if swallowed.

Of course, there are products in the home during the holiday season which can cause acute poisoning if ingested by children. Some of the more common ones include:

Alcohols – children are especially at risk for poisoning from even small amounts of ethanol alcohol because their blood sugar may drop to low levels.

Mistletoe – although American mistletoe is not as deadly as the European type, ingestion of more than two or three of the berries can cause poisoning in children.

Holly – the bright red berries are very attractive to a small child and can cause vomiting and diarrhea if more than a few are ingested.

Batteries – yes, batteries that are swallowed can cause choking, intestinal blockages or injury, and poisoning from leaking contents.

Poison Control Hotline
1-800-222-1222

Submitted by Virginia Poison Control Center

Medications are a problem year round; however, family and friends can bring unexpected danger with them when they visit during the holidays.